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Letter dated 15 October 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement concerning the parliamentary elections in Rwanda issued by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Marcello **Spatafora**
Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 15 October 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Statement concerning the parliamentary elections in Rwanda issued on 13 October 2003 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union

On the occasion of the parliamentary elections in Rwanda, the European Union wishes to highlight the importance of the completion of the country's electoral process, which represents a very important step towards national reconciliation and the consolidation of viable democratic institutions. Like the presidential poll on 25 August 2003, the parliamentary elections were conducted in a calm, orderly manner and with an organizational effort reflecting the care taken by the Rwandan authorities with Rwanda's political transition.

At the same time, the European Union has noted the comments made by its election observer mission in its preliminary statement on 3 October 2003 as regards the obstacles to opposition activities, the intimidation, the threats and the arrests that marked the election campaign, as well as the irregularities discovered at a number of polling stations. Fully inclusive involvement of Rwandan society in the country's political development remains a precondition for real economic and social progress in Rwanda.

The elections in Rwanda also represent a key factor in the prevailing situation in the Great Lakes region. The achievement of a political transition in Rwanda comes at a time when the peace processes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Burundi are showing encouraging progress. The European Union reaffirms its willingness to assist the reconciliation process in the Great Lakes region, which may emerge the stronger after the latest developments.

The acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, the associated countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey and the EFTA countries members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.